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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Note verbale dated 26 May 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to provide herewith the statement of the Republic of Armenia on the Seventh Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council under agenda items 3 and 9.

* Circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

Statement by Armenia on the Seventh Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

In the early hours of April 2, 2016 Azerbaijan unleashed large-scale offensive operations against Nagorno-Karabakh thus violating trilateral agreements of 1994 on cease-fire and of 1995 on the cease-fire consolidation, signed by Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, which do not have time limits. Azerbaijan has violated basic principles of international law, the decisions and declarations adopted by the OSCE Summits and Ministerial Councils, blatantly disregarding the statements of the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – the Russian Federation, United States of America and the French Republic, on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

From the very beginning of the Azerbaijani offensive the civilian infrastructures and civilian population, including children and the elderly, became intentional and indiscriminate targets. Among the first civilian victims were a 12 year old boy who was killed in front of the school building as a result of a Grad missile attack and two other schoolchildren wounded.

In one of villages in Karabakh three elderly persons, including a 92 year old woman, were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed. Moreover, three captive soldiers of the Nagorno-Karabakh armed forces were beheaded by Azerbaijani armed forces in ISIL style, which was subsequently celebrated in the towns and villages and publicized through social networks. Furthermore, during the exchange of bodies of the deceased between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan carried out through the mediation of the International Committee of Red Cross and the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, it was registered that the bodies of deceased transferred by the Azerbaijani side had the evidences of severe torture and mutilation.

Those barbaric acts of Azerbaijan, going beyond elementary norms of civilized world constitute violations of core international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc. In this context, it is also imperative to specifically mention the blatant violation by Azerbaijan of Geneva Convention of 1949, which inter alia addresses groups exposed to specific risks, such as children, women and elderly and its additional protocol of 1977.

Azerbaijan demonstrates its total disregard for international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Persistent violations of human rights inside Azerbaijan, consistent attacks and imprisonment of its civil society representatives, the media and human rights defenders, coupled with the regular dissemination of intolerance and hatred against the Armenian people provides breeding ground for the criminal military adventurism of the Azerbaijani regime.

At the time of the gathering of the Seventh Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan continue to violate the cease-fire, with new human losses. Since the beginning of Azerbaijani aggression and up today as a result of Azerbaijan's aggression hundreds were killed and wounded, including civilians. This is a manifestation of the absurdity of celebrating more peaceful and socially inclusive world, building mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious identities in a

country, which is engaged in barbarity and killings a few hundred kilometres away from the venue of the Forum. This is an affront to the image and the integrity of the Alliance.

In this dire situation the convening of the Seventh Forum should have been cancelled in Azerbaijan - a country that grossly violates the very aims, principles, values of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Armenia remains committed to the purposes of the Alliance and remains its Friend. However, given the circumstances, Armenia does not join the consensus on the Declaration of the Seventh Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. Therefore, in the absence of consensus the Declaration cannot be adopted.

Armenia rejects the Seventh Forum, to be held in Baku, in its entirety, including its outcome.